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ABSTRACT

This study's findings are consistent with the views and findings of others, such as Hansen(1960), Coleman (1966), and Mayor and Katzenmeyer (1974). Also, this study as well as others explicitly demonstrate to educators and those of us in the helping professions, such as school counselors and counselor educators, that the most studied group of people in our two hundred years of freedom from England blacks, are still educational achievement laggers when academic achievement is assessed by traditional techniques. Desegregation has been no panacea for the non-White and poor white child in a middle class, Anglo Saxon oriented educational system, the reason being that blacks, other minority groups,and poor whites continually demonstrate a lower level of performance on standardized tests. To say that the aforementioned groups' scores on such assessment measures are better than they were when segregation was vogue says very little. It is only a manifestation of educational malignant oblivion. Being better off but still not quite as intellectually astute as one's peers does not enhance positive self concepts nor does it facilitate marketability in our competitive world of work. (Author)

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The impact of desegregation on achievement test scores of black and white students in rural and an urban county: Implications for counseling

This study's findings are consistent with the views and findings of others, such as Hansen (1960), Coleman (1966), and Maynor and Katzenmeyer (1974). Also, this study as well as others explicitly demonstrate to educators and those of us in the helping professions, such as school counselors and counselor educators, that the most studied group of people in our two hundred years of freedom from England, blacks, are still educational achievement laggers when academic achievement is assessed by traditional techniques. Desegration has been no panacea for the non-white and poor white child in a middle class, Anglo Saxon oriented educational system. The reason being that blacks, other minority groups, and poor whites continually demonstrate a lower level of performance on standardized tests. To say that the aforementioned groups' scores on such assessment measures are better than they were when segregation was vogue says very little. It is only a manifestation of educational malignant oblivion. Being better off but still not quite as intellectually astute as one's peers does not enhance positive self concepts nor does it facilitate marketability in our competitive world of work.

The May, 1954 Supreme Court's decision prohibiting legally enforced segregation has given rise to many doubts, anxieties and apprehensions in members of both races. There has been a tremendous amount of speculation surrounding the affect of desegregating public schools. Twenty-two years have passed since the United States Supreme Court's decision in Brown vs. Board of Education. The Court not only laid down a rule of law; it changed an American way of life. We have moved from Brown to Boston.

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Method

A major purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of desegregation on the Florida Statewide Twelfth Grade Achievement Test scores of black and white high school seniors in a rural and an urban Florida county. One thousand, four hundred sixteen students, all high school seniors, were divided into eight groups for this study. The groups were based on race (black and white), residence (rural and urban) and school type (segregated and desegregated).

Instrument

The instrument chosen for use in this study, The Florida Statewide Twelfth Grade Achievement Test, was inaugurated in Florida in 1935 and since 1940 has been sponsored and conducted by the Board of University Examiners in Gainesville, Florida. Since 1963, Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey has prepared and validated special tests for the Florida program.

The Florida Statewide Twelfth Grade Testing program is conducted in all Florida high schools each fall to provide comparable ability and achievement data on all seniors. The test is administered by the pupil personnel staff in the schools. Florida schools must attain a composite test score of at least 300 out of a possible 495 in order to gain admittance to a state university. The complete battery consists of two booklets, including tests in mathematical science, natural science, social science, English and an aptitude test.

Results

Nine hypotheses were tested in this study. The results are listed below:

1. There was a significant difference between black segregated students' total test score and black desegregated students' total test score. The score was higher for black desegregated students.

2. There was a significant difference in test scores between urban and rural desegregated black students. The scores were higher for urban desegregated black students.

3. There was a significant difference in test scores between segregated and desegregated white students on the total test. The test score was higher for desegregated white students.

4. There was a significant difference in test scores between urban and rural desegregated white students. The test scores were higher for urban desegregated white students.

5. There was a significant difference in achievement test scores between urban segregated black and urban desegregated white students. The scores were higher for urban desegregated white students.

6. There was a significant difference in achievement test scores between rural desegregated black and rural desegregated white students. The scores were higher for rural desegregated white students.

Analyses of variance of the data revealed significant statistical differences between black and white students' test scores. The differences were favorable toward white urban desegregated students' test scores.

These findings have shown that the achievement of black and white students increased after four years of desegregation. Nevertheless, white students' achievement test scores are higher than black students' achievement test scores.

The fact that the differences in achievement test scores are greater for white students than for black students could possibly indicate the need for more educational support services for black students.

Conclusion

A major conclusion reached as a result of the findings of this study is that desegregation has not had a negative effect on total test scores for black and white students and urban and rural students. It is recognized that several other factors could have caused changes in the Florida Statewide Twelfth Grade Test scores but since desegregation a greater number of blacks have obtained higher test scores.

Implications for Counseling

If we as counselors, counselor educators, and/or people helpers are to impact positive renewal on the educational enterprise, we must consider alternative approaches to the commitment to which we embrace. One alternative approach is action. Counseling is doing, involvement.

Doing What Regarding Testing?

I. Establishing rapport with administrators and teaching faculty in order to make in-service workshops or programs implemented by counselors beneficial regarding testing.

A. This is one means of calling attention to our propensity for rampant universal theorizing, that is, everybody solves problems alike, everybody thinks alike, everybody has the same values and life styles. Since there are certain conditions such as segregation, poverty, geographical locale, etc. that don't permit such universal theorizing, these conditions must be taken into consideration when selecting, administering, and interpreting test data but above all when teaching. The establishing and using of local norms would be applicable and useful in minimizing universal theorizing.

B. Involvement regarding executing such workshops and programs may also call attention to and prepare testers of the need to become prepared observers, that is, know what you're looking at; be perceptive to the testee that one is attempting to assess.

C. A third issue that such in-service programs might address themselves to is training testers to become answer analyzers. Instead of judging the student on the basis of the test maker's predetermined responses and evaluating the response as incorrect, find out what question

the student actually heard or read. Is he responding to what was asked or what he thought was asked? Predetermined responses or answers is also a disadvantage of standardized testing.

D. A fourth area to be dealt with in a workshop setting is the facilitation of teacher awareness of and sensitivity to the need to become teacher-student interactionists.

There is a need to be descriptive regarding what is to be taught, but this description must be phrased in terms of goal behavior which is congruent with the students that are being taught.

Gordon (1961) corroborates this fact in his description of the educative process:

"Education involves a multitude of transactions between what is indigenous to the learning experience. The learner brings to the learning task a physical self, an intellective self, and an emotional self. These several aspects of self interact not only among themselves but also interact with the effective environment, and these respective interactions are reciprocal, dialectical, and relative....relative in the sense that interactions are always a function of a particular set of conditions, and a specific interaction has to be understood in relation to these conditions."

A specific activity which counselors and/or teachers might utilize to enhance students' performance on standardized tests is described by Rudman (1976). She suggests three steps:

1. make students comfortable in the testing situation,
2. show them how to complete tests efficiently, and
3. help them see standardized tests just for what they are.

She refers to this exercise as the Warm-Up, the Dry Run, The Follow-Through.

II. Counselor educators have a strategic role to play in effecting positive renewal on the educational enterprise. The crucial issue is training counselors to become more sophisticated test users and analyzers. Such sophistication would mandate adequate skills in statistical concepts also. A beginning point is explaining the definition of a standardized test.

Gibson (1976) provides a practical and simple definition of a standardized test:

"A standardized test is one in which the procedures of administering a test and scoring it have been made uniform or standard. This uniformity makes it possible to compare the scores of students from different parts of the country. A standardized test is written by a test publisher, who produces the test for a national market and provides with it a manual of instructions on administration and scoring. In addition, before releasing the test, the publisher administers it to a sample of the kind of students for whom it is intended; this is done in order to obtain norms-or standards--by which scores on the test may be interpreted."

Speaking in goal-behavior terminology, counselors will have achieved a satisfactory level of understanding of the meaning of standardized test when they:

(1) cease their building of educational railways-placing students in Track I, Track II and Track III which leads to what? Academic Failure.

(2) dispel the IQ myth by encouraging and/or suggesting that students take courses that will enhance their level of achievement and competence; thereby placing less emphasis on IQ scores.

(3) re-evaluate their attitudinal predetermined roles which involves looking at a score made on a standardized test and deciding what a student has the ability to do or not to do.

(4) preuse test manuals to determine the suitability of the test for the students to be assessed.

(5) question tactfully teachers and administrators about the consistency of skills taught in class and the skills selected by the test designers as important (content validity).

(6) establish local norms for standardized tests that are used.

It is time we start working together for an educational system that will not only provide equal educational opportunities and high test scores but a quality education as well.

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